

**Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2012, 11:15 a.m.**

- We believe based on currently available information that the attacks in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. Consulate and subsequently its annex.
- The crowd almost certainly was a mix of individuals from across many sectors of Libyan society. That being said, we do know that Islamic extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida participated in the attack.
- Initial press reporting linked the attack to Ansar al-Sharia. The group has since released a statement that its leadership did not order the attacks, but did not deny that some of its members were involved. Ansar al-Sharia's Facebook page aims to spread Sharia in Libya and emphasizes the need for jihad to counter what it views as false interpretations of Islam, according to an open source study.
- The wide availability of weapons and experienced fighters in Libya almost certainly contribute to the lethality of the attacks.
- Since April, there have been at least five other attacks against foreign interests in Benghazi by unidentified assailants, including the June attack against the British Ambassador's convoy. We cannot rule out the individuals has previously surveilled the U.S. facilities, also contributing to the efficacy of the attacks.
- We are working w/ Libyan authorities and intelligence partners in an effort to help bring to justice those responsible for the deaths of U.S. citizens.

**12:23 p.m.**

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- The crowd almost certainly was a mix of individuals from across many sectors of Libyan society. The investigation is ongoing as to who is responsible. That being said, we do know that Islamic extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida participated in the attack violent demonstrations.
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**Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup> 9:45 a.m.**

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